

REMARKS

Claim 3 has been converted from dependent form into independent form. This change in form does not narrow or limit the scope of the claim. The independent claim which claim 3 was formerly dependent upon has not been cancelled. Therefore, the full scope of the doctrine of equivalents should apply to claim 3 as if it was originally presented in independent form when the application was filed. In view of paragraph 5 of the office action, claim 3 should be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, 7, 8 and 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 0398473 A1. The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

Claim 1 claims that the at least one wall portion is at least partially **curved** and adapted for guiding at least one cable of one or more other cable connector assemblies. EP 0398473 A1 merely discloses a cable connector assembly comprising a cover having a wall portion provided with an **angled ramp surface**. (see Fig. 2, column 2, lines 25-32 and column 3, lines 32-33). As seen in Fig. 5 there is plenty of space above the connectors 8b and below the connectors 8a, so the conductors 10 can extend vertically away from the connectors. However, this does not address the problem of when there is limited vertical space (or limited space past the top side of the connector regardless of its orientation). With applicants' invention as shown in Fig. 1, the curved wall portion allows the conductors to extend away from the connectors without extending in a vertical direction very much. This is provided

by the curved wall portions, and provides the advantage of being able to use the invention in a limited vertical space environment, as well as providing a gradual redirection of the conductors. The gradual redirection of the conductors by the curved wall portion prevents a kink or damage to the conductors. EP 0398473 A1 cannot be used in a limited vertical space environment (or environment where there is limited space past the top side of the connectors) without risking kinking or damage to the conductors from the sharp bend that would otherwise be needed.

There is no disclosure or suggestion in EP 0398473 A1 of the curved wall portion recited in claim 1. Indeed, the ramp surface in EP 0398473 A1 is an essential feature of the connector with regards to the recited **"angled chute-to-ramp"** relationship when two connectors are positioned side-by-side. There is no disclosure or suggestion of replacing the **"angled chute-to-ramp"** relationship of EP 0398473 A1 with a curved wall portion as claimed in claim 1. The features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.


Though dependent claims 2, 7, 10 and 11 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Independent claim 8, similar to claim 1, claims at least one wall portion which is at least partially **curved** for guiding at least one cable of one or more other cable connector

assemblies. Independent claim 12, similar to claim 1, claims that a first one of the wall portions is at least partially **curved** and adapted for guiding a second cable of another cable connector assembly on the first wall portion. In view of the comments noted above, these independent claims (as well as the claims dependent thereon) should also now be considered allowable.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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1/25/07  
Date

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Clair F. Mean  
Name of Person Making Deposit